

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USDEL JEC PARIS

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

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. O. 11652 N/ A

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TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: MAY 17 INDOCHINA PRESS SUMMARY

1. ALL PAPERS FEATURE WH STATEMENT THAT RECENT

CONGRESSIONAL ACTION TO STOP CAMBODIA BOMBING COULD "SEVERELY UNDERMINE" INDOCHINA PEACE PROSPECTS AND IS ESPECIALLY DAMAGING ON EVE HAK-THO TALKS. SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERS FORCE MANSFIELD DELAY VOTE UNTIL AFTER MEMORIAL DAY RECESS. SCOTT SAYS SENATE ACTION SHOULD NOT ENDANGER HAK POSITION IN TALKS WITH THO. NYT'S APPLE REPORTS SAXBE SAYS HE WILL SUPPORT BOMBING FUND CUTOFF BECAUSE BOMBING "SHOWS A CALLOUSNESS FOR CIVILIANS THAT WE CANNOT TOLERATE IN THIS COUNTRY." HE THINKS AMERICANS ARE "FED UP." ZIEGLER DECLINES RESPOND TO QUESTION WHETHER PRESIDENT BELIEVES GKR SURVIVAL IN US VITAL NATIONAL INTEREST. APPLE ALSO REPORTS RICHARDSON IN SECRET TESTIMONY LAST WEEK CITED IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING UP BOMBING AT LEAST UNTIL IMMINENT BEGINNING OF KHMER MONSOON SEASON WHEN COMMUNIST MILITARY OPS WILL BE CURTAILED.

2. POST'S RANDAL, IN PARIS, REPORTS HAK, ON ARRIVAL, SAYS HE CONFIDENT TALKS WITH THO WILL LEAD TO "MAJOR PROGRESS" IF HANOI'S GOODWILL MATCHES US. ACCORDING RANDAL, PARIS OBSERVERS BELIEVE HANOI CONSIDERS PRESIDENT WEAKENED BY WATERGATE AND IN NO POSITION

REITERATE LAST MONTH'S THREATS TO RENEW NVN BOMBING. NYT REPORTS TALKS WILL INCLUDE CAMBODIAN AND LAOTIAN PROBLEMS. NYDN GOES FURTHER IN IDENTIFYING RANDAL'S "OBSERVERS," INDICATING THEY ARE SOURCES CLOSE TO DRV PARIS DEL. GVN SAYS TPJMC MILITARY TALKS AT IMPASSE AS RESULT VC STUBBORNNESS, BUT GVN WILL KEEP TALKING (NYT).

3. NEW GKR CABINET TAKES UP DUTIES AND SUPREME COUNCIL MAKES FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE ON BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY. DIPLOMATS INTERESTED IN PLANNED REORGANIZATION OF ARMED FORCES, ACCORDING POST'S LIPPMAN. SIRIK MATAK SAYS GEN. FERNANDEZ EXPECTED TO BECOME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. WESTERN OBSERVERS BELIEVE CABINET UNCLASSIFIED

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MADE UP ESSENTIALLY OF NON-POLITICAL TECHNICIANS AND COUNTRY WILL BE RUN BY SUPREME COUNCIL.

4. HOW LONG COUNCIL WILL HOLD TOGETHER REMAINS BE SEEN. UPI REPORTS IN TAM SAYS "NATIONAL CONCORD" IS GOAL OF "PRESENT SPECIAL GOVERNMENT" (NYT). US PLANES DESTROY LARGE COMMUNIST MOTOR VESSEL IN MEKONG 58 MILES NW OF PP, BOMB SUSPECTED ENEMY POSITIONS NEAR KOMPONG CHAM, AND HIT MEKONG SHORELINE IN ADVANCE OF ANTICIPATED NEW OIL CONVOY FROM SVN (NYT, NYDN).

5. NHAN DAN PUBLISHES LONG ACCOUNT OF WATERGATE INCIDENT, SAYING IT HAS "EXPOSED THE VICIOUSNESS AND

ROTTENNESS OF THOSE HOLDING THE HIGHEST POSITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES" (WP).

6. GVN SPOKESMAN SAYS MRS. NGO BA THANH, ALONG WITH TRAN NGOC CHAU, WILL BE TURNED OVER TO COMMUNISTS BECAUSE OF " CLOSE LIAISON" SHE HAD WITH THEM. NYT NOTES SHE HAS DEGREE FROM COLUMBIA AND WAS HEAD OF ASSOCIATION OF VIETNAMESE WOMEN FOR THE RIGHT TO LIFE. YALE TURNS DOWN PETITION BY STUDENTS AND 60 FACULTY TO GIVE MRS. THANH HONORARY DEGREE (NYT).

7. ICCS SOURCES SAY CAPTURED NVA SOLDIERS REVEAL CONTINUED NVA INFILTRATION INTO SVN SINCE C- F. CANADIAN AND INDONESIAN ICCS MEMBERS SAY INTERROGATIONS REVEAL NVA TROOPS HAVE BEEN TOLD LITTLE ABOUT C- F AND NOT INSTRUCTED NOT TO FIRE AT ICCS CHOPPERS. INFORMATION DEVELOPED BY ICCS LOCAL TEAMS IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE. REPORTS SAID TO BE GENERATING INTENSE CONTROVERSY WITHIN ICCS WITH POLGARIANS TAKING POSITION THAT THERE NO PROOF THOSE INTERROGATED ARE

REALLY NVA (BUTTERFIELD, NYT).

8. VC BOMB KILLS 20 AT OUTDOOR MOVIE; PRG DELS REFUSE ATTEND TPJMC MEETING BECAUSE GVN SENT BUSES TO TRANSPORT DEL INSTEAD OF PROVIDING GASOLINE FOR CARS DEL HAD BEEN USING (WP, NYT, CHITRIB). GVN ANNOUNCES ITS FORCES KILL 49 COMMUNIST ENGAGED IN UNCLASSIFIED

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MOVING LARGE QUANTITIES OF ARMS NEAR SVN COAST. ARVN WERE ON " SECURITY DEFENSE MISSION" (WP, NYT, CHITRIB). SUN' S ISAACS DESCRIBES PROBLEMS CONFRONTING REFUGEES WHO RETURN QUANG TRI. ABOUT 22,000 HAVE RETURNED THUS FAR, 41,000 EXPECTED RETURN IN MAY AND JUNE, AND 150,000 FACE MANY MORE MONTHS IN CAMPS. REFUGEE CAN' T FIND HIS FORMER HOME IN RUBBLE OF TOTALLY- DESTROYED CITY.

9. CSM' S SAIKOWSKI REPORTS AS HAK PREPARED TO " GRASP THE CAMBODIAN NETTLE" IN PARIS, HANOI IS HAMMERING ON THEME THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON ISSUE MUST BE WITH SIHANOUK. US INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS SAY HANOI RECENTLY APPEARS HAVE ADOPTED LESS HOSTILE TONE TOWARD GKR SINCE POLITICAL CHANGES THERE, SUGGESTING IT EVENTUALLY MAY BE PREPARED NEGOTIATE WITH GKR. AT PRESENT, SIHANOUK SAYS HE WON' T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH LON NOL, BUT SOME US ANALYSTS BELIEVE HE WOULD BE WILLING JOIN PP COALITION BECAUSE HE DOESN' T TRUST HIS OWN AIDES IN GRUNK OR HANOI- LED KHMER INSURGENTS. SIRIK MATAK TOLD NEWSMEN PRINCE SHOULD BE ALLOWED COME BACK. SAIKOWSKI SAYS SON SANN RECENTLY CAME TO PP WHERE HE

CALLED ON SWANK; SOME SPECULATION HE MIGHT ACT
AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN LON NOL AND PRINCE.

10. CSM' S OKA, IN PARIS, SAYS HAK ENTERS NEGOTS WITH
THO WITH FEWER CARDS UP HIS SLEEVE THAN BEFORE. THO
ONLY NEEDS READ US NEWSPAPERS TO SEE CONGRESS'
RECALCITRANT MOOD TOWARD CONTINUED US INVOLVEMENT IN
CAMBODIA.

11. SFRC DELAYS CONFIRMATION VOTE ON AMBASSADORS
GODLEY, SULLIVAN AND MARTIN. SEN. CASE AIDE
SAYS SENATOR HAS
NOTHING AGAINST APPOINTEES AS INDIVIDUALS. BUT
ACCORDING POST' S RICH, " SEVERAL SENATORS AT THE
CLOSED MEETING REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED UNEASINESS ABOUT
THE SAME PERSONS SHUFFLING IN AND OUT OF A HANDFUL
OF RELATED JOBS INVOLVING A SINGLE PART OF THE WORLD,
FORMING A COTERIE OF LIKE- MINDED POLICY- MAKERS.
YESTERDAY' S DELAY IS LIKELY
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TO HOLD UP ACTION UNTIL MID- JUNE AT LEAST." MCCLOSKEY,

WRIGHT, SANCHEZ AND KUBISCH APPOINTMENTS APPROVED
(WP). NYT REPORTS THAT SFRC DEFERS MARTIN' S NOMINA-
TION UNTIL HE CAN TESTIFY ON REPORTED INTERFERENCE
IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ITALY WHILE AMBASSADOR THERE.
SEN. HUMPHREY REPORTEDLY ASKED FOR DELAY ON MARTIN' S
APPOINTMENT.

12. GWERTZMAN (NYT) FINDS EA, OTHER OVERSEAS WATERGATE
CRITICISM MILD: LITTLE REACTION IN CAMBODIA; PRC
PRESS CARRIED NOTHING, BUT OFFICIALS ARE SUPPLIED
FOREIGN PRESS REPORTS. JAPAN PRESS PROVIDES HEAVY
COVERAGE, BUT IMPACT ON COUNTRY LIMITED SO FAR;
CONCERN FOUND IN SOUTH KOREA THAT TURMOIL MAY SPILL
OVER INTO ACTIONS AFFECTING SK SECURITY. IN LAOS,
SOUVANNA TOLD FRIENDS WATERGATE COMES AT " EXTREMELY
DANGEROUS TIME" FOR ALL INDOCHINA. EVENT GIVEN
WIDE COVERAGE IN SVN, SOME THERE SEIZING ON CASE TO
VENT ANTI- US FEELINGS.

13. GLOBE' S JHABVALA (MAY 16) REPORTS ON AMBASSADOR
GODLEY' S DISCLOSURES ABOUT THAI VOLUNTEERS IN LAOS
BEFORE SFRC, AND DOS' FOLLOW- ON JUSTIFICATION FOR USE
OF AND US FUNDING OF VOLUNTEERS IN LIGHT OF VN C- F.
FINDS JUSTIFICATIONS " FUDGY AND UNCONVINCING."

14. SUN SEES IN RECENT HILL ACTIONS REASSERTION BY
CONGRESS OF ITS PROPER ROLE IN WAR- POWERS AND REJECTION
OF ADMIN RATIONALE FOR PERSISTENT US MILITARY INVOLVE-
MENT IN SEA. CONCLUDES THAT PRESIDENT IS IN CRISIS

OF LEADERSHIP, WITH HIS CREDIBILITY ON ALL MATTERS
OF POLICY AND PERFORMANCE SEVERELY IN DOUBT. CONTINUED
CAMBODIA BOMBING CANNOT BUT DEEPEN THAT DOUBT.

15. CHARLES YOST (CSM) SUGGESTS THAT SINCE CON-
CEPTION EACH SIDE HAS OF PARIS AGREEMENTS IS RADICALLY
DIFFERENT, HAK- THO MEETING WILL BE MORE OR LESS
DIALOGUE OF THE DEAF, IN WHICH EACH WILL BE TALKING
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PAST THE OTHER. FEELS IT WOULD BE OVERWHELMINGLY
IN INTERESTS OF US AND THREE INDOCHINA STATES FOR US
IMMEDIATELY TO CEASE AND HENCEFORTH REFRAIN FROM ANY
MILITARY ACTION IN THEIR TERRITORIES. FUTURE OF SEA
SHOULD BE SEASIAN FUTURE. IF US COMPLETES ITS WITH-
DRAWAL, THERE WOULD BE NO SERIOUS EXTERNAL DANGER
IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE - FROM CHINA, USSR, OR ANYONE ELSE.

AFTER 30 YEARS OF WAR, NVIETNAMESE AND THEIR CONTINUED
OBSESSION WITH SOUTH WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DOMINATE OTHER
PARTS OF PENINSULA. WHAT EMERGES WILL, FROM US VIEW-
POINT, BE UNTIDY, ODD, AND ASIAN, BUT IT WILL
IN NO REAL SENSE THREATEN US SECURITY.

16. JOSEPH KRAFT (WP, SUN), ANALYZING POST- WATERGATE
ATMOSPHERE, BELIEVES IN SEA CHANCE OF DIVERTING NVN
TO PEACEFUL PATH THROUGH ECON AID HAS BEEN MUCH
DIMINISHED. BUT WITH PRESIDENT' S SUPPORT OF THIEU
LIKELY TO FLAG SOMEWHAT, SAIGON MAY FINALLY SEE
WISDOM OF SERIOUS EFFORT TO CUT DEAL WITH COMMUNISTS.

17. LAT(MAY 16), NOTING CONGRESSIONAL MOVES TOWARD
IMPOSING TIGHTER RESTRICTIONS ON PRESIDENT' S WAR- MAKING
POWERS, CONCLUDES THAT HAK WILL GO INTO TALKS WITH
THO DEPRIVED OF SOME WEAPONS OF PERSUASION HE MIGHT
LIKED TO USE IN BOLSTERING VN C- F. THIS IS AS SHOULD
BE. IF HAK ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING WITHOUT THREAT
OF US BOMBING, HE SHOULD HAVE STAYED HOME. AT SAME
TIME, IMPORTANCE OF HAK' S MISSION IN DIPLOMATIC TERMS
MUST NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED, FOR AGREEMENT IS OF
SUPREME IMPORTANCE TO FUTURE OF INDOCHINA. BEST
POSSIBLE THING FOR ALL CONCERNED WOULD BE TO MAKE
C- F WORK AS INTENDED, BUT THIS IS UP TO PEOPLE OF
INDOCHINA. INDOCHINA IS NOT APPROPRIATE TARGET FOR
US BOMBS, WHICH MAKES THE MORE IMPORTANT HAK' S
POWERS OF PEACEFUL PERSUASION.

8. STAR- NEWS (MAY 16) CONTENDS THAT GIVEN LACK
OF COMPLIANCE WITH C- F TERMS BY ALL PARTIES, HAK' S
CHANCES OF SALVAGING SOMETHING OF PARIS AGREEMENT
WERE NEVER BRILLIANT, BUT WATERGATE IS SUBSTANTIAL
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ADDITIONAL HANDICAP. HOWEVER, HANOI WOULD BE QUITE
MISTAKEN TO OVERESTIMATE DISARRAY IN WASHINGTON
WHEN IT COMES TO BOMBING IN CAMBODIA OR OTHER RETALIA-
TORY ACTION ADMIN MIGHT TAKE. HAK STILL HAS CARDS TO
PLAY. RUSH

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